

Children, Youth & Family Consortium

CYFC Monthly

CYFC Monthly – October 2014

Grant Award to Fund CYFC Partnership

The Children, Youth, and Family Consortium (CYFC) is pleased to announce a recent grant award from U of MN Extension. The award will provide funds to support our ongoing partnership with Bruce Vento Elementary School in east St. Paul. The *Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds, Healthy Learners: Growing Environments to Foster Learning and Academic Success* initiative will focus efforts on three specific goals: develop engaging, creative learning environments that increase academic success at Bruce Vento; build positive connections between the school and its surrounding community; and, increase family and community access to healthy foods.

Bruce Vento Elementary School enrolls 500 students, 96 percent of whom are on free or reduced lunches. Sixty percent of the students' primary languages are other than English. The school is located in the Payne-Phalen neighborhood and represents a diverse community of immigrants from Southeast Asia and Africa, African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans. Despite strong family connections, there are complex disparity issues around food resources, neighborhood safety, and economic security.^{1,2}

For children living in under-resourced communities, educational success can be elusive. Even with efforts to boost achievement through increased class time on core subjects, students who experience "opportunity gaps" and chronic stress continue to fall behind in school.³ Compelling evidence shows that healthy children are more successful in school than those with chronic stress and illness. For families living in poverty, access to healthy food, safe neighborhoods, and rich learning opportunities too often mean poor educational outcomes for the children.⁴ Solutions will not be found solely in academic reforms. The complexity of the social and community challenges that create these gaps and compromise educational success demand interdisciplinary interventions.

Identifying two unmet needs at the school, the principal and the school behavior specialist indicated that additional funds would allow them to develop two new projects: a calming room for students exhibiting dysregulation and a school garden to address food scarcity and learning through nature. The calming room will provide a resource for children to safely manage their behavioral and emotional outbursts and is intended to increase the amount of time students are engaged in learning. The Vento school garden has the potential to provide a number of benefits for students: a therapeutic stress buffer to increase resilience; and, a place to engage students who may have diverse learning needs, limited English proficiency, or disabilities.⁵ Additionally, the garden can potentially provide a more abundant community food source, and a means for fostering community leadership and promoting public perception of the school.

The following members of the University and the Twin Cities community have enthusiastically endorsed their participation in the project. The team will continue to seek additional parent, teacher, and student participation during the two-year planning and development process:

- Ed Frickson: Psychologist, Family Innovations Inc.; Calming Room Consultant & Trainer

- Craig Hassel: U of M Extension Nutritionist, Department of Food Science & Nutrition; Community Garden Consultant
- Mary Ann Hennen: Program Leader, U of M Extension Community Vitality; Civic-Engagement Consultant
- Mary Marczak: Evaluation and Research Specialist, U of M Extension Family Development, Evaluation Consultant
- Scott Masini: Bruce Vento Elementary School Principal; Community Partner
- Jason Sole: Assistant Professor, Metro State University; Community Partner & Trainer
- Laura Sopeth: Teaching Staff, Occupational Therapy, U of MN; Calming Room Consultant and Trainer
- Bhaskar Upadhyay: Associate Professor, STEM, U of M Curriculum and Instruction; STEM Liaison & Trainer
- Jennifer Skuza: Extension Professor, Achievement gap consultant
- Shirley Vang: SNAP-Ed Educator, U of M Extension Family Development; SNAP-Ed programming

There are many others who have been instrumental in planning and informing this process: Bachman's Garden Center (donated and delivered a raised garden bed to the school); Shirley Bass, Associate Professor, Concordia College; Jessica Barnes, Communications Specialist, CYFC; Cari Michaels, Extension Educator, CYFC; and, Michael Brott, Associate Director, CYFC.

References:

1. Saint Paul Public Schools. Bruce Vento Elementary School. 2013. Accessed August 7, 2014. [no longer active]
2. City of Saint Paul. [City of Saint Paul Police Crime Report.](#); 2013:1-60.
3. Warner, E., Kooma, J., Lary, B., & Cook, A. [Can the body change the score? Application of sensory modulation principles in the treatment of traumatized adolescents in residential settings.](#) J Fam Violence. 2013;28:729-738.
4. Shonkoff, J. P., & Garner, A. S. [The lifelong effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress.](#) *Pediatrics*. 2012;129(1):e232-46. doi:10.1542/peds.2011-2663.
5. Radke, B., Hinz, L., Horntvedt, J., Chazdon, S., Hennen, M. A., & Allen, R. Civic Engagement at a Glance.; 2012:1-2.

Judy Myers, MS, RN
Extension Educator

Sara Langworthy, Ph.D.
Extension Educator

Consortium News

Register Now for Lessons from the Field! Secondary Traumatic Stress: Building Resilience for Professionals

Date: October 30, 2014

Time: 9:00 am - 12:30 pm

Cost: Student \$20, Greater MN/Live web stream \$25, Metro \$50

Location: University of Minnesota McNamara Alumni Center and via live web stream.

We invite professionals who work with traumatized children, youth and families to join us for presentations and small group conversations discussing adaptability and health maintenance. Participants will learn to integrate practices that help diminish the negative impact of secondary traumatic stress. [Register](#) now!

Mental Health: Understanding and Supporting Families Through the LifeSpan

Date: December 5, 2014

Time: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Cost: \$50-\$110

Location: New Brighton Community Center and via video conference at Regional Host Sites.

CYFC's Judy Myers and Cari Michaels will present during the annual Minnesota Council on Family Relations Fall Conference. This conference is designed to share substantive information, provide thoughtful dialogue and an opportunity for individual reflection in order to bolster professionals working with families. Presenters include an array of professionals who will share information, lessons from the field, case studies, strategies and resources. [Learn more](#) and [register](#) today.

University & Community Announcements

Before the ABC's: Promoting Self-Regulation for School Readiness

Minnesota Association for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health

Dates: November 24, 2014

Time: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Cost: \$109.65

Location: Dakota Lodge

1200 Stassen Lane

St. Paul, MN 55118

Christine Wing, Ph.D., Speech and Language Pathologist and Michelle Fallon, LICSW, IMH-E (IV), Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant will present this basic to intermediate level workshop for parents and professionals interested in school readiness. Learn how the ability to regulate emotions and behavior, communicate and get along with others is essential for school readiness. Research tells us that these skills develop in the context of caring, responsive relationships and the communication that is part of them. Grounded in infant and early childhood mental health and communication-based strategies, this multidisciplinary workshop will offer 1) an overview of the development of self-regulation and the role of communication skills; 2) evidence-based strategies for promoting self-regulation; and, 3) opportunities for problem-solving and discussion.

Youth Work Learning Lab — YPQA Reliability for the External Assessor

[University of Minnesota School of Social Work](#)

Dates: December 2-3, 2014

Time: 9:00 am — 4:00 pm both days

Cost: \$500

Location: University of Minnesota St. Paul Student Center — Room 110

2017 Buford Avenue

St. Paul, MN 55018

Deborah Moore and Stephanie Love will facilitate this [course](#) focused on giving participants video practice and discussion to increase their accuracy in observing and scoring using the Youth Program Quality Assessment Tool (YPQA). It is a great course for those who will be supporting others in the use of the tool in a network or organization, or to ensure that assessors are providing reliable data for use in planning and improvement. Participants who successfully achieve acceptable levels of reliability become Weikart Center "endorsed assessors" and are able to collect "research quality data." This means that assessors are tested and achieve an 80% accuracy rating determined through a video reliability check.

From At-Risk to "Untapped Potential" and Culturally Responsive Youth Work Workshops

Youth Intervention Programs Association

Date: November 7, 2014

Time: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Location: Rochester Community and Technical College

851 30th Ave SE

Rochester, MN 55904

James Robertson will present "Untapped Potential" recognizing how culture influences our personal bias, and how those perceptions inform the way we respond to others. He will explore differing perspectives on the development of students with untapped potential and help you develop a personal or organizational strategy that will affect how an organization can better serve students with untapped potential. Margo Herman, University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development, will present "Culturally Responsive Youth Work." Participants will learn to recognize your own cultural perspective and social identity, develop skills for building intercultural relationships and to explore ways to make youth programming more inclusive and empowering.

Envisioning a Brighter Future — NAMI Minnesota 2014 State Conference

National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota

Date: November 15, 2014

Time: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Cost: \$50 for members, \$125 for non-members

Location: St. Paul RiverCentre

175 Kellogg Boulevard West

St. Paul, MN 55102

[NAMI's state conference](#) will open with keynote speaker Hakeem Rahim who will share his inspirational story of recovery and wellness. Closing keynoter Adam Levy, lead singer-songwriter for The Honeydogs, will talk about reducing stigma. Workshop topics include: the effects of childhood trauma; interactions between diet and medications; integrated dual disorder treatment; schizophrenia; the latest psychiatric research; and employment supports. There will also be a series of workshops for teens and young adults on higher education, employment and relationships. In addition, NAMI will hold its Annual Awards Luncheon.

Connecting Diverse Communities to the Outdoors: Addressing Culture, Equity and Access

[Minnesota Children & Nature Connection](#)

Date: November 5, 2014

Time: 9:00 am - 4:30 pm

Cost: \$69

Location: Keller Golf Course Clubhouse

2166 Maplewood Drive
Maplewood, MN 55109

[Join](#) keynote speaker Ryan O'Connor, Policy and Planning Director for Ramsey County as he takes a look at the changing demographic of Minnesota and how our parks and outdoor spaces will remain a cultural and environmental asset for all races, cultures and ages Yingling Fan of the University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs and former CYFC Scholar and Raintry Salk of the Metropolitan Council will present an evidence-based picture of how is using parks and consider how underserved populations use parks and barriers they perceive [Register](#) by October 24th.

Job Opportunities

Outpatient Therapist — Washburn Center for Children [no longer active]

Crisis Stabilization Assistant Supervisor — Washburn Center for Children

[Children's Mental Health Therapist II — People Incorporated](#)

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